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## An Experimental Study of the Written Composition Freshman Students of Prairie View College for 1934-35

Cornelia Branch

*Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College*

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AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF THE WRITTEN COMPOSITION  
OF  
FRESHMAN STUDENTS OF PRAIRIE VIEW COLLEGE FOR  
1934 - 35

В у

Cornelia Branch

A Thesis in English Submitted  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of

Bachelor of Arts

in the

Division of Arts and Sciences

of the

Prairie View State Normal and Industrial College

Prairie View, Texas

May, 1935



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## O U T L I N E

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- I. Origin of the Problem
- II. Detailed Description of Procedure
- III. Classification of Errors of the Select Group
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- IX. Comparison of the Two Groups  
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- X. Devices for Improvement of Freshman Composition
- XI. Recommendations
- XII. Value of the Study

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

-:-

The writer wishes to express her sincere appreciation to her supervisor, Miss A. L. Campbell, and to Mr. Earl L. Sasser for their aid in the completion of this thesis. The writer also wishes to thank Miss Gwendolyn Moss and other friends whose assistance was highly valuable.

To those students in the select freshman English class and the freshman nurses' section the writer also wishes to express her appreciation for the willing cooperation and assistance given.

Cornelia Branch



## ORIGIN OF THE PROBLEM

It has been found that Prairie View college students, generally speaking, have a poor background in grammatical principles. Freshman English tests, given at the opening of school, help to prove the above statement. The large per cent of senior students who fail the English test given prior to graduation is further proof of the fact that the background of many Prairie View students in grammatical rules and their application is poor.

The large number of seniors taking drill English indicates the fact that little has been accomplished during the students' four years in college toward strengthening their weaknesses in grammar. Drill English classes are offered to freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors. However, when a student has been enrolled in these classes and still fails the senior English test, the obvious conclusion is reached that these drill classes have not been as effective as they should have been.

The condition is very probably poor in-



struction in high school and in grammar school English. Locating the reason for the condition, however, does not remedy it.

In the writer's opinion, to remedy the condition, one must start the remedial measures on the entering freshmen and work with them during their entire four years.

The advantages of knowing how to write and speak English are too obvious and numerous to mention. To say that a knowledge of correct English is important enough to demand all the emphasis possible will suffice.

The concern of this writer is to employ remedial measures to eliminate entirely or at least to an appreciable extent the grammatical weaknesses of Prairie View College students. In the attempt to accomplish this ultimate aim, the writer worked on an experiment suggested by the head of the English department at Prairie View College, Mr. Earl L. Sasser. The specific aim is to aid two groups of 1934 entering freshmen in their grammar usage, through the channels of this thesis. The writer is confident that a pro-



cedure similar to the one followed in this thesis will be a way out of the present difficulty of grammatical weaknesses.

The author of this thesis was assigned the group of 1934 entering freshmen in freshman composition. The group was the most select group of the entire freshman class. This group was selected on the basis of the high scores which the individuals composing the group made in the achievement test, given to freshmen on entering Prairie View. The second group assigned the writer was the 1934 entering freshman novices.

At the end of the first semester, the writer had access to the folders of all students in these two groups. These folders contained all the written work which students had submitted during the entire semester. Each folder was carefully gone through, and an individual record of each student's work was kept. Each student was given a carbon copy of his recorded sheets of errors and he was written composition work for the first semester.

The writer went through all of the papers kept in the folders and classified the errors. From this classification the writer was able to see the strong



## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURE

The author of this thesis was assigned two groups of 1934 entering freshmen in freshman composition. One group was the most select group of the entire freshman class. This group was selected on the basis of the high scores which the individuals composing the group made in the achievement test, given to freshmen on entering Prairie View. The second group assigned the writer was the 1934 entering freshmen nurses.

At the end of the first semester, the writer had access to the folders of all members in these two groups. These folders contained all the written work these students had submitted during the entire semester. Each folder was carefully gone through, and an individual record of each mistake in each folder was kept. Each student was given a carbon copy of his recorded sheets of errors made in his written composition work for the first semester.

The writer went through all of the papers in each section and classified the errors. From this classification the writer could see the strong



and weak points of each group. After carefully studying the classification, the writer was able to see the characteristic errors of both groups. The writer then devised a test based wholly on the common errors of the two groups. The test included material taken only from these persons' records of errors.

Each student was given ample time, and was advised to put concentrated study on the errors.

The writer called the students of both sections together and each section was given an hour examination, which the writer devised on the basis of the students' characteristic errors.

The writer then compared each test paper with that individual's record of errors, to see how many types of errors he had learned to master, and how many types of errors he yet was unable to recognize.

As a result of the comparison, the writer was able to see the effectiveness of the whole procedure and the possible effectiveness of continuing such a procedure with the entire freshman class of 1934 and adopting the procedure as a required feature of freshman English.



CLASSIFICATION OF ERRORS OF  
THE MOST SELECT GROUP OF 1934 FRESHMEN

I. PUNCTUATION

A. Period

- |                         |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Oct 15 1934          | 4. 1401 S          |
| 2. Columbus Texas       | 5. The F E R A and |
| 3. Prairie View College | C W A are pro-     |
| Prairie View Texas      | jects also the     |
| Oct 17, 1934            | N R A which help   |
|                         | students           |

B. Interrogation Marks

1. When asked why they often reply "Im just as good as she is, aren't we both Negroes."
2. Some of the upperclassmen say "Oh is there anything I can help you do."

C. Semi-colon

1. I don't remember how I got off the track however I do remember hearing that whistle of the engine.
2. Thought is given to color but not so much as before hair straightening they now consider a necessity.

D. Dash, colon, and parenthesis

1. The difficulty is this, when will the freshmen come into their own.
2. Englosed please find (3) three dollars.



### E. Apostrophe, possessives, contractions

1. She was the inn-keepers maid.
2. The schools tuition is higher this year.
3. I'm sure they won't bother freshmen again.
4. They dont ask my mothers advice now.
5. Tis indeed a time for peace.

### F. Quotation Marks:

1. The story Bright Skin resembles Scarlet Sister Mary very much.
2. By giving, we will find it is more blessed to give than to receive.
3. DuBois Dark Princess and Souls of Black Folk are good.

### G. Comma

1. Saturday September 1, 1934 the La Salle Motor Company sold me Mable Winn a 1934 La Salle
2. One of the boys called a taxi but it never came.
3. Prairie View is a regular city, it has a shoe shop ice plant printing shop, laundry, hospital and many houses.
4. Margaret screamed for help one of the officers rushed to her room.

## II. GRAMMAR

### A. Agreement of verbs and subjects

1. She and Deerslayer was separated.
2. Martin, a friend of theirs, help Gerard to get out of prison.
3. A freshman possess no college spirit.
4. Each of these persons live in Dallas.

### B. Agreement of pronouns and antecedents

1. Everywhere I met somebody I knew and they cheered me up.



2. One will grow tired if they do not rest.
3. One may find their calling very soon.

#### C. Agreements Miscellaneous

1. The type of picture wanted are moral ones.
2. Those kind of people are pessimists.

#### D. Pronoun Cases

1. There is a close relationship between Mary and myself.
2. It takes a long time for he or she to become adjusted.
3. We should think of the persons whom are responsible.

#### E. Verbs

##### 1. Tense forms

- a. Mr. Banks begun his term in 1926.
- b. It have been the custom for Wiley and Prairie View
- c. They had experience such a scene before.

##### 2. Sequence of tenses

- a. Gerard noticed a red light glimmering on the ceiling and opens the window.
- b. Miss Fisher makes everything clear and used also vivid description.

##### 3. Adjectives and adverbs: Confusion of the two, wrong forms.

- a. Newland tells his wife he has to go to Washington on business which is false.
- b. I think this air of aloftness is only temporarily.
- c. The story ended happy.
- d. They think different now.



## 4. Conjunctions and prepositions confused

- a. They could make the women appear  
like they were stark raving mad.

## III. SPELLING

## A. Unclassified

- |                |                  |                |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| 1. domitories  | 7. practially    | 13. enimies    |
| 2. fashioned   | 8. environment   | 14. usualy     |
| 3. recomended  | 9. occassions    | 15. divising   |
| 4. apperiance  | 10. chist        | 16. guarante   |
| 5. unaquainted | 11. peculiar     | 17. cubbord    |
| 6. similair    | 12. intertaining | 18. sacraficed |

## B. Careless

- |                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. identy       | 10. distruction   |
| 2. Lawerence    | 11. presuasion    |
| 3. enthusiasms  | 12. whisle        |
| 4. Elizabethian | 13. oppinion      |
| 5. blisfully    | 14. embarrishment |
| 6. nineth       | 15. industial     |
| 7. Saturday     | 16. differt       |
| 8. writter      | 17. premarily     |
| 9. complitely   | 18. chirman       |

## C. Capitalization errors

- |                  |              |            |
|------------------|--------------|------------|
| 1. Freshman      | 4. he (God)  | 7. negroes |
| 2. Juniors       | 5. Community | 8. english |
| 3. Negro Society | 6. History   | 9. jew     |

## D. Compounding and separating

- |             |                  |                       |
|-------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. hos-tess | 2. intert-aining | 3. unacquain-<br>nted |
|-------------|------------------|-----------------------|

## E. Ie vs ei

- |             |             |          |
|-------------|-------------|----------|
| 1. recieved | 3. preist   | 5. thier |
| 2. releif   | 4. beleived | 6. leif  |

## F. Mispronunciation

- |              |               |                 |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. sophmore  | 5. assurred   | 9. potrays      |
| 2. Batchelor | 6. esseys     | 10. undobtly    |
| 3. Pilgrams  | 7. benifit    | 11. whisle      |
| 4. persueded | 8. consitered | 12. discription |



## G. Doubling

1. equiped 2. becomming 3. begining

## H. Coined words

1. gangesterism 2. bader 3. busted

## IV. SENTENCE STRUCTURE

## A. Incomplete

1. While the juniors are independent, popular, pleasure loving and kind.
2. Take for example the students of Prairie View myself included.

## B. Vague

1. A conversation was heard about a freshman doing something, and failed to do it correctly.
2. Such a Katherine, her grand-daughter was very modern.
3. Parties and social functions are given among doctors and teachers, that being the highest stratum of society.

## C. Wrong reference of pronouns and modifiers. Dangling constructions.

1. The setting of the story is in Canada. It is about a man who did a girl a grave injustice.
2. If a person should arrive in town who has plenty of money, he is made a part of the cream of society.

## D. Arrangement of parts. Split Constructions Misplaced words, phrases, clauses.

1. I should like for you to please consider my plan.
2. I resolve to never engage in another race.



### E. Parallel Structure

1. I was a member of the Girl Scout organization, played guard on the basket ball team, and a member of the Literary Society.
2. I was placed as substitute teacher for one month for the absence of the primary teacher and all was pleased at my teaching ability.

### F. Shift in point of view: Lacks coherence

1. Sylvia's friend excels her in her boy friend, and they marry is unnecessary
2. Class distinction has begun to multiply and are being recognized by those affected.

### G. Omissions

1. He reminds of Bert.
2. I got up at seven and ate breakfast.
3. He felt so bad over the situation he left without a word.

## V. DICTION

### A. Words confused in meaning

1. One may find the cook seated besides the principle of the school.
2. Any girl would have excepted the invitation.
3. Due to the fact that Mr. Hughes has a clear insight of his characters he is able to write so interestful.

### B. Colloquialisms

1. There are quite a few of my friends here.
2. He winds up as a nobody.

### C. Slang

1. They are just alright.
2. Boy that is some swell place.



3. Julie Ann quits him for a guy named Sam.  
4. They try to be dicty.

#### D. Trite

- Underline
1. Your presence will be appreciated by all.
  2. Yours for a favorable and early reply.
  3. We now wait your sentiment and permission.
  4. This leaves me well in everyway and I hope you are likewise.
1. One of the most common faults in writing is the use of trite expressions.
2. Most English novels are also moving and (contain, contains) a lot of descriptions.
3. These passages are well done because (it, they) (relate, relates) to the rest of the story and (serve, serves) as (an explanation, explanations) for the action.
4. Any one who (is, are) (interested, interests) in reading autobiographical (types of work, type of work) will enjoy this.
5. The reader may frequently (lose, lose) the connecting links.
6. The Negro in the end will (lose, lose) under the S. S. A.
7. I was (to, too) sleepy (too, to) write.
8. (There's, There is) much rivalry (among, between) the classes which (help, helps) to (keep away, to always keep) the interest (keen, keenly) and (alertly, alert).
9. Each of the halls (are, is) well equipped.
10. The head of each department (hold, holds) a (Bachelor's Degree, Masters Degree) in (his, their) (respective, respectively) (field, fields).
11. I thought (sure, surely) they were gone.



12. TEST FOR THE MOST SELECT GROUP OF 1934

-Entering Freshmen-

I.

Underline the correct forms:

1. One of them (was, were) passing us.
2. Most English novels are slow moving and (contain, contains) a lot of description.
3. These passages are well done because (it, they) (relate, relates) to the rest of the story and (serve, serves) as (an explanation, explanations) for the setting.
4. Any one who (enjoy, enjoys) reading autobiographical (types of work, type of work) will enjoy this.
5. The reader may frequently (loose, lose) the connecting links.
6. The Negro in the end will (loose, lose) under the N. R. A.
7. I was (to, too) sleepy (too, to) care.
8. (There's, There is much rivalry (among, between) the classes which (help, helps) to (keep away, to always keep) the interest (keen, keenly) and (alertly, alert).
9. Each of the halls (are, is) well equipped.
10. The head of each department (hold, holds) a (Master's Degree, Masters Degree) in (his, their) (respective, respectively) (field, fields).
11. I thought (sure, surely) they were gone.



12. One may find (his, their, she) card seated (besides, beside) the (principal, principle) of the school.
13. It takes a long time for (he or she, her or him) to get adjusted at any college.
14. It was to be settled (among, between) my (sister's friend, sisters friend) and(I, me).
15. Of the two plans, I like the first (best, better).
16. Of the three, she is the (least, lesser, less) qualified for the position.
17. Some people object (of, to, from) a girl being married.
18. (There, their) are many ways in which students may show (their, his, there) school spirit.
19. There was a log (laying, lying) between (he, him) and (I, me).
20. Instead of(them, their) forming (a, an) original idea they (hold, holds) to (a, an) old traditional one.
21. Much progress and improvement (have, has) been (made, done) since Mr. Banks (have, has) been here.
22. (Its, It's) the (papers, paper's) (ads, advertisements) that (helps, help) (its, it' being (a, an) worthwhile periodical.
23. The money that (was, were) derived (were divided (between, among) we, us) two.
24. (Its, It's) a pleasure to (acquaint,
25. (Its, It's) appeal (lie, lies, lays, (its, it's)(character sketches, ch sketches).



## II.

Underline the correct forms;

<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>
1. four act	fouract	four-act
2. week-end	weekend	week end
3. to gether	to-gether	together
4. twentyone	twenty one	twenty-one
5. thirty-four	thirtyfour	thirty four
6. more-so	moreso	more so
7. how-ever	how ever	however
8. if I was	if I were	if I wuz
9. Oct 1, 1934	October 1, 1934	October 1 1934
10. my teachers book	my teacher's book	my teacher book
11. good bye	goodbye	good-bye
12. well-educated	well educated	well educated

## III.

Rewrite these sentences and make them gramatically correct:

1. When I was about a mile from the station I heard a whistle blow I did not know whether or not it were my train or not.

2. One of the boys called a taxi but it never comes.

3. Prairie View is a fine place however it was somewhat lonesome to me my first few days but I got over it.

4. She the innkeepers daughter was nice to each man who paid their money to her prompt.

5. prairie view college  
prairie view texas  
september 1 1935

6. dr l e Smith junior  
1817 state line ave  
Texarkana Ark



7. Margaret screamed for help one of the officers came into her room

8. There was a man who desired money and was too lazy to work therefore he Resolved to enter the field of cozening.

9. Aunt Hagar her mother is an old Christian woman and she try to train her children.

10. I dont remember how I got off the track however I do remember hearing the engine whistle

#### IV.

Write these sentences correctly:

1. I made a remark about the driver driving I said he drove to slow he proceeds to show me he can drive faster for he turned a curve and misses a Greyhound by a inch.

2. Bright skin resemble scarlet sister Mary very much. Both stories tend to show the low life of the Negro.

3. Mama asked me have you kissed your aunt minnie goodbye I dropped my head no I answered I have not.

4. This was not the feeling of most of this years Freshmen they didn't have this feeling of inferiority.

5. The sea is very very beautiful you must see its waves.

---

Student 3 represents the average students



## ANALYSIS OF EFFECTIVENESS: ADVANCED GROUP

The writer has chosen those persons to use as models to explain her impressions as to the effectiveness of this whole procedure. In the select group, Student A is typical of some in her group; Student B is typical of others in the group, and Student C is typical of some others in the group.

The group represented by Student A is the superior group within this select class. The students comprising this group gave evidences in their tests of having mastered, to an appreciable extent, the errors made in their compositions during the first semester. In interviews with many of the group, the author of this thesis was told that receiving an individual classification of their errors helped them more clearly to see their weaknesses in grammar. Many said that they studied the errors carefully in order to attempt to score a perfect paper in the test which all knew was to be given.

Student B represents the average students



in this select group. These students have partly mastered their individual errors. In the author's opinion, their not scoring higher was due to the fact that they are not as conscientious as are the students represented by Student A.

Student C represents the below average group of students in this select group. These students have mastered very few of their individual errors which they made during the first semester. This author is willing to admit that this group's background in grammar is not as good as the other students' background; yet, she feels that lack of interest in self-improvement is a more significant reason for this group's averaging such low grades on the test.

The underlying purpose of the whole procedure is a good one. It is obvious that any conscientious student, who has in his possession a classified record of his individual errors, made in composition covering a period of five months, would study his errors carefully.

Then after the tests were given and graded, every student was given an opportunity to com-



pare his test paper with his individual record of errors to see exactly what weaknesses he had mastered and what weaknesses he had failed to master.

9. In a procedure of this type, one need not guess about the weaknesses he may have because he has them in his possession, in black and white, to study in order that he may overcome them.

10. She does not use flowery phrases and her words are well chosen and easily understood.

11. One day during their journey, night came before they reached the hotel. Leave had planned to spend the night and they were obliged to stop at a roadside inn.

12. Mr. Banks, the principal is sponsoring a tournament which begins Monday, October 1st.

13. As you well know, the purpose of this campaign is to administer aid to the less fortunate of our city.

14. Much progress and improvement has been made since Mr. Banks has held that office.

15. I have noticed in assembly or chapel that they do not set an example of courtesy or attentiveness to the speaker or performer.



## STUDENT A'S RECORD OF ERRORS

- P. 1. The average student is friendly but in so large a crowd as this student body there will always be some who are aloof
- P. 2. The sophomores barricaded the doors and there was a general scrimmage.
- P. 3. During this evolution the absolute and the true significance of the day is practically obscure.
- P. 4. However, he makes several advances before offering marriage and Helga then finds she has an intense dislike for the man and refuses.
- P. 5. She does not use flowery phrases and her words are well chosen and easily understood.
- P. 6. One day during their journey, night came before they reached the hotel. Deoys had planned to spend the night and they were obliged to stop at a wayside inn.
- G. 7. Mr. Banks, the principal is sponsoring a tournament which begins Monday, October 1st.
- B.S. 8. As you well know, the purpose of this campaign is to administer aid to the less fortunate of our city.
- Ag. 9. Much progress and improvement has been made since Mr. Banks has held that office.
- Ant. 10 I have noticed in assembly or chapel that they do not set an example of courtesy or attentiveness to the speaker or performer.



Ant. 11. This was set aside as a day of prayer, rejoicing and for the most part religious services.

Tense S. 12. Gerard noticed a red light glimmering on the ceiling and opens the window.

Contra. 13. I'm sure, however, they will not bother the freshmen again.

Write out 14. I have worked as stenographer for the Van Winkle Book Store of Dallas for 2 years.

15. At that time I moved to Chicago where I worked 3 years.

Hyphenation - In Part II of the test, Student A failed to hyphenate "week-end" and "good-bye". In Part IV of the test, Student A failed again to hyphenate "good-bye" and capitalized "freshmen" incorrectly.

It is obvious that student A is a superior student. However, the results of the test reveal that Student A has overcome her weaknesses in grammar which were recorded the first semester. For a student of her type, a project, such as the author of this thesis has undertaken, is highly beneficial and enthusiastically endorsed by this author.



## STUDENT B'S RECORD OF ERRORS

- P. 1. Prairie View is a fine place however  
it was somewhat lonesome to me my first  
few days but I got over it.
- P. 2. I have made many, many friends while  
here and I hope to make more.
- P. 3. On March 28, 1901 the college department  
was established.
- P. 4. The weather was cold and the day before  
sleet had fallen although the sun was  
shining the sleet had not melted.
- P. 5. They wanted to be married but Benjamin  
decided he was unworthy of her.
- W.W. 6. Ivanhoe is a very romancing type.
7. Knights and other nobilities . . . .
- Ag. 8. Then certain other characters encourages  
one to read on.
9. Most English novels are slow moving and  
contains a lot of description.
- Sp. 10. identy, anziety, unasuming, divising,  
repetition, appearence, intertaining,  
enimies, controll, domitories, fashioned,  
recomended, guarertee, Freshman, diffent.
- Sp. 11. apperiance, unaquainted, Negro Society
- Col. 12 . . . . quite a few
- F.S. 13. For men: Luckie and Foster hall.
- Ag. 14. One of them were passing us



Ag. 15. Anybody . . . could be . . . safe  
with anyone they might choose in re-  
spects to what people would say about  
him if he were seen with this specific  
person.

Sp. 16. desert,

P. 17. This was the case of Gerald in the  
Cloister and the Hearth.

Ab. 18. Oct. 15th Ave

Awk. 19. I appreciated the elaborate party  
you give in honor of me this summer.

Inc. 20. So don't ask any questions.



STUDENT B'S TEST RESULTS AS COMPARED WITH  
HER INDIVIDUAL RECORD OF ERRORS

Student B did not profit as much as student A by having been given her errors to study. In one instance a sentence taken from Student B's record was included on the punctuation division of the test, and the student missed the identical sentence again.

Student B's record showed a weakness in agreement. The test showed that she had not mastered this weakness.

Student B's record showed errors in failing to enclose titles in quotation marks. The test showed that she had not yet learned to underline or enclose titles in quotation marks.

Student B's record showed no errors in hyphenation, however, that is one of her weaknesses. Student B's spelling is poor.

Student B, I think profited some by presenting her her errors in order that she could see her weaknesses. Intense study of these errors would have yielded more significant results.



## STUDENT C'S RECORD OF ERRORS

- C. 1. One of the most remarkable things that about college life is the is the systematic order of things.
- P. 2. I am working in the Treasure department.
- Sp. 3. Truely, insted, useing, substantuate.
4. Sept. 29, 1934
- Lc. 5. My Dear Mrs. Bagwell
- C; lc. 6. The honor of your presence is requested by men and Family to dine with us on Sunday October 7, 1934.
- Sy. 7. pleas-ure
- Lc. 8. Stenographer, Book-keeper
- Sp. 9. indivudally, collectively, merily, direnction
- W.W. 10. was to great
- P. 11. I did not wait to satisfy my curiosity for it had turned to panic.
- Sp. 12. carrivan, potraying, protraitial, author,
- Sp. 13. Pacafic ocean, conscerned, groupe
- D. 14. The stories contents were taken from occurances covering a period of one-year.
- Inc. 15. As the bringing of Molly out of the prairie fire by Banion.
- Sp. 16. South
- Sp. Inf. 17. He never seemed to just put in a character without a purpose.



P. 18. The chief character Kenneth Harper was a soldier.

Ant. 19. When he went to pay Jane a visit bent on making love, but during the little chat of common condition fell into a discussion of the race problem.

Vague 20. The narrative is of good quality bringing into the events at the best time and using the expressions that keeps one at a mild state of mind as he goes along.

P. 21. The plot of the story was well planned it carried its purpose and meaning in place.

C.B. 22. Gerard said a bear did it, the doctor contended that it was a dog bite.

Sp. Ag. 23. The praactioners attempts to deceive the public by disfiguring his body.

Ag. 24. One of the most common examples are found in carnivals.

P. 25. The language used was very natural just as the person was potrayed, so was his language applied.

Ref; C. 26. Thanksgiving can hardly be recognized as the day handed down by the Pilgrim Fathers on which they gave thanks to the Lord.

The score of 44 out of 50 points was made in the section devoted chiefly to agreement.

The fact noted that Student C has made some improvement, which to this writer indicates possibilities for more improvement later.



STUDENT C'S TEST PAPER'S RESULTS  
AS COMPARED WITH HIS RECORD OF ERRORS

Student C's test paper was compared with his record of errors.

Many of the types of errors recorded on his sheets of errors were repeated in the test. His punctuation was poor as revealed in his individual record. The test showed very little improvement in punctuation.

The test did show some instances wherein he had improved, for example, he missed none of the exercises on agreement of subjects and verbs on the test. This was a common error on his record.

Student C scored 44 out of 50 possible points on the first part of the test, 4 out of 12 possible points on the second part of the test, 5 out of 20 points on the third part of the test, and 12 out of 18 points on the last part of the test. The score of 44 out of 50 points was made in the section devoted chiefly to agreement.

The test showed that Student C has made some improvement, which to this writer indicates possibilities for more improvement later.



# METHOD OF GRADING TEST PAPERS OF THE SELECT GROUP

Part I.	Score . . . . .	50
Part II.	Score . . . . .	12
Part III.	Score . . . . .	20
Part IV.	Score . . . . .	18

Perfect Score . . . . . 100

## -Results of Test-

- I. Student "A"
- II. Student "B"
- III. Student "C"

## -Distribution of Scores-

	Part I	Part II	Part III	Part IV	Total
I A	50	10	20	15	95
II B	36	4	20	15	75
III C	44	4	5	12	65



## CLASSIFICATION OF ERRORS OF THE NURSE SECTION

### I. Punctuation

- A. Period end of a sentence and after abbreviations
  1. I think time and labor are important factors.
  2. Mar 7 1934
  3. Mr DuBois initials are W E B
  4. Please find enclosed \$5.25 for the hat.
- B. Interrogation marks
  1. She asked me, "Do you think you will like the nurse training course"
  2. So she said "My child is only ten years of age, she will not need a ticket, will she."
- C. Semicolon
  1. I was afraid, in fact I was horrified.
  2. Hawthorne's pictures are very clear therefore one can almost see the peoples in their minds eye.
  3. I had studied English, history, mathematics and physiology in high school therefore my course would be easy in college.
- D. Colon, dash, parenthesis
  1. The nurse told me: that she would assist
  2. Enclosed please find--money order for (3) three dollars.
- E. Apostrophe: possessive, contractions, letter and symbol plurals
  1. Deny's was a dear friend of Gerarld.
  2. It was seven oclock.
  3. The nurse washed her babys face.
  4. Its my duty to stay on first floor.
- F. Quotation marks
  1. Hopkins said in the Time the aged, the sick and the crippled or insane were all cared for by the Federal Funds.
  2. His favorite expression was le diable est mort.
  3. Booker T. Washingtons Up From Slavery is widely read.



## G. Comma

1. I have learned that the real causes of diseases often lie far back in the past involving heredity, childhood, surroundings, youthful pleasure labor living conditions and home experiences.
2. When women did this people would sympathize with them and help them.
3. It takes place in a small town Luling Texas in July 4 1934.

## II. GRAMMAR

## A. Agreement of Verbs and Subjects

1. I think time, labor and knowledge is important factors.
2. John and Henry is going home.
3. My points in 1934 was very good.

## B. Tense Forms

1. I did appreciate what they done for me
2. I have always liked to always sing that song.
3. If I was making a cake and the sugar was left out the cake would be a failure.

## C. Agreement of Pronouns and Antecedents

1. Everyone love her and give her praises.
2. Mr. Washington write on the Negro before they were freed.
3. He would never pass anyone without speaking to them.

## D. Agreements Miscellaneous

1. Those kind of people are ruining the nation.
2. We made several trip to Corsicana.
3. These meeting helps us intellectually.

## E. Pronoun Cases

1. This does not apply to children whom has had the experience of every day life.
2. I intend to marry a man whom I can think will be able to take care of me.



### F. Sequence of Tenses

1. After the programme we motor to Corsicana.  
We arrived about 11 o'clock that night.
2. They journey through the forest until  
night then they took the bear skin and  
used it for cover.
3. Denys always made little incidents  
wherever he goes.

### G. Adverbs and Adjectives: Confusion of the two

1. I am personal acquainted with him.
2. It is a task which is so terrible hard.
3. Washington beautiful describes how Tuskegee  
progressed.
4. This plan will work successful.

### H. Nouns: Wrong Number, Plural Endings

1. This was one of the most enjoyable trip  
of my life.
2. The delight of all good fighters in a real  
cause is victory.

### I. Conjunction and Prepositions; Confusion of the two

1. He is tall as his father.
2. It looked like it was going to rain.
3. I felt like I was going to faint.

## III. SPELLING

### A. Unclassified

- |             |                 |
|-------------|-----------------|
| 1. rinkled  | 4. intergection |
| 2. speach   | 5. seam         |
| 3. vitamans | 6. audiance     |

### B. Careless, final letter dropped

- |            |                    |
|------------|--------------------|
| 1. nures   | 5. currents events |
| 2. befor   | 6. developes       |
| 3. Houston | 7. dicided         |
| 4. Austen  | 8. convient        |

### C. Doubling

- |             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| 1. begining | 3. equiped |
| 2. droped   | 4. sadened |



## D. Ie vs ei

1. audeince
2. beleived

3. recieved
4. greif

## E. Mispronunciation

1. contact
2. sholders
3. lerned
4. efford
5. loan fun

6. doring
7. docter
8. everysince
9. feeling

## F. Compounding and separating

1. p-roblem
2. can-sed
3. sch-ool

4. acqua-inted
5. univ-ersity
6. int-ering

## G. Capitalization

1. negro
2. Prairie view

3. Miss pearl
4. Freshman, Junior,  
Senior

## IV. SENTENCE STRUCTURE

## a. Incompleteness

1. How to care for the patients' rooms.
2. Something I can do for the public as a whole.
3. Other things as the passing of chairs, work of the Blacksmith type work and different thing in the science building.

## b. Vague

1. I was a senior in F. I. S. college in which I was very glad.
2. About his social standing he has plenty.
3. First we should know that a patient room should be keep clean daily, sweep, plenty of sunshine, ventilated and as sanitary as possible.

## c. Rambling

1. I wanted to learn the proper way to care for the sick and the afflicted knowing that to be a good nurse one must be well-bred which I considered I was one of that type and one must sacrifice a lot of time that they will really need also pleasure.



d. Wrong Reference of Pronouns and Modifiers

1. In September 1, 1934 I spent a week with my cousin and brother in San Antonio, Texas, which I enjoyed very much.
2. Whenever he would pass a priest or someone of his kind he would not appear to be so happy.

e. Arrangement of Parts. Misplaced words, phrases, clauses. Split constructions

1. I went on a very pleasant trip before leaving home which was back to my old home in San Antelo, Texas.
2. In high school we always used to forever wish to get a chance to be in college.

f. Parallel Structure

1. Having attended high school for several years and making very good in my studies and was an inspiration to me.
2. I am planning on entering Meharry college and take up courses leading to a degree.

V. DICTION

a. Words confused in meaning.

1. It gives us an assurance of what there is to come.
  2. This is one man who's disposition is the same at all times.
  3. The deal has caused some Negroes to loose good jobs.
  4. They were called in the present of visitors.
  5. The high points were as followers.
  6. She is all ways ready to help.
  7. It was to late to go when I arrived.
  8. I have in mine a person to ask.
  9. The power of being self confident with aid.
  10. Small children will difference from adults.
-



## TEST DEVISED FOR THE FRESHMEN NURSES

### I. Underline the correct forms:

1. The deal has caused some Negroes to (lose, loose) good jobs.
2. We made several (visit, visits) and (saw, seen) many (thing, things) at these (meeting, meetings).
3. The race is not given to (he, him) who (is, are) swift but to (he, him) (that, who) (endure, endures) to the end.
4. I want to marry a man (whom, who) I admire.
5. Pearl (who's, whose, whom) innocent life was wrecked, was now (twenty-eight, twenty eight).
6. There (was, were) outstanding features of the years that (took, taken) place at Prairie View.
7. I think time, labor, and knowledge (is, are) important factors.
8. John and Henry (is, are) going to (their home, there homes, their home).
9. This (do not, does not) apply to children (who, whom) (has, have) had previous experience.
10. There (was, were) a log (lying, laying) between (he and I, him and me).
11. I intended to marry a man (who, whom) (has, have) had the experiences of everyday life.
12. It looked (like, as if) I was going to faint.



14. She is always ready to help.

15. They were called in the presence of visitors.

## II. Rewrite Correctly

1. I think time labor and knowledge is important factors.

2. His family settled in a small town Molden West Virginia near salt furnace.

3. Mar 7 1934 Mr. DuBois spoke at Prairie View College Prairie View Tex.

4. The person is 5 ft 2 in tall.

5. So she said my children is only ten years of age, they will not need a ticket will she.

6. She asked me do you think you will like the nurse training course.

## III. Correct

1. I was afraid in fact I was horrified

2. Hawthornes pictures are very clear therefore one can almost see the people in their minds eye.

3. I had studied english history mathematics and Physiology in high school therefore my course would be easy in college.

4. After the program we motored to Corsicana.  
We arrived about 11 that nite and was entertained.

5. They journey through the forest until it was to late to hurt then they take the bear skin and used it for cover and went to sleep.

6. I am personal acquainted with him.



7. Washington beautiful describe how the work  
began on the school.

8. She is a brown skin middle age clear eye  
bright complexion religious incline girl.

IV. Copy the correct forms and rewrite the incorrect  
forms:

- |                                |                                     |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. He smile                    | 9. I were embarassed                |
| 2. This do not apply           | 10. If I were                       |
| 3. It have always              | 11. They smile                      |
| 4. They was                    | 12. Dickens novels                  |
| 5. The blessing were<br>asked  | 13. Booker T. Washingtons<br>book   |
| 6. They is not success-<br>ful | 14. Didn't, doesn't,<br>hasnt       |
| 7. If I was making             | 15. Those kind                      |
| 8. I have plan                 | 16. These meeting, several<br>visit |



## RESULTS OF THE TEST GIVEN FRESHMEN NURSES

The test given to freshman nurses was devised by using the common errors of this group as a basis for subject matter.

The test papers of this group were compared with the record of errors. Very little improvement was noted. Most of the errors which the individuals made in the folders were repeated in the test.

This fact does not discount the value of the test, nor does it reflect unfavorably on the method of the procedure. The same procedure was used with the superior group and the results yielded were favorable.

The results of the nurses' test compared in similarity to the results of the group "C" students' test in the select group.



## DEVICES FOR IMPROVEMENT OF FRESHMAN COMPOSITION

The present fault in written composition can be pointed to poor grammatical construction. Before written composition can reach or even approach the level of good composition, grammatical errors must be eliminated. The dire need of Prairie View college freshmen is a good foundation in grammar. Robert C. Polley in his Grammar and Usage in Textbooks on English has this to say: "The need for grammatical training is felt not only in elementary schools and high schools but in colleges." This statement leads one to know that the problem of poor grammar is not peculiar to Prairie View. He gives the prime function of grammar in this statement: "The greatest contribution which grammar study can make is to the mastery of the sentence; to unfailing recognition of the sentence unit in speech and writing and the power of building clear, vigorous and varied sentences and interpreting their structure."

Emphasis should be put on individual instruction. The change in the nature of the college population, the advent of large classes and the desire to vitalize content, should exercise their share of



pressure on the English department to bring about differentiation in the course of study. The best method of differentiation is homogeneous grouping on the basis of ability. This method is being advocated and practiced by many colleges. Prairie View has a similar grouping in its freshman English courses.



## R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

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The author of this thesis has the following recommendations to offer in an attempt to improve freshman composition.

- I. A full time efficient, sympathetic, patient grammar teacher should be hired.
- II. Her duty would be to teach grammar through individual instruction.
- III. A procedure similar to the one in this thesis should be followed. The procedure would take a form like this:
  - A. Each student should keep a record of his grammatical errors in composition.
  - B. He should study this record carefully and study the weaknesses with the grammar teacher at a regularly appointed time.
  - C. On the basis of these errors, the grammar teacher should give him an individual test.
  - D. He should compare his test papers with his record of errors.
  - E. A comprehensive test should be given to determine more exactly the general grammatical weaknesses.
  - F. The teacher, by any devices or skills she may employ, would concentrate on each individual's weaknesses and so adapt his instruction to his weaknesses in grammar.



G. This feature would be done outside of the classroom. Students should be given credit in classes however for their grades on these tests which should be given them.

H. This feature should be a required course of one semester hour's credit.

The writer has in her possession some good grade examples of mistakes made by freshmen students from all over the state. In the writer's teaching experience, this should material of practical errors actually made by Negro students representing various schools in this state will be valuable.

To the teachers who teach these students these work the writer used this study is valuable. The teacher is able, through this study, to have a record of each individual's errors and of his test, which was based on the characteristic errors of his group. From these records the teacher can measure the student's progress.

To the students, this study is invaluable for it called to their attention their grammatical weaknesses.



## THE VALUE OF THIS THESIS

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The value of this thesis is threefold. The work was of personal value to the author for it gave her a worthwhile experimental study to work on. The writer has in her possession some concrete examples of mistakes made by freshman students from all over the state. In the writer's teaching experience, this thesis material of practical errors actually made by Negro students representing various schools in this state will be valuable.

To the teachers who teach these students whose work the writer used this study is valuable. The teacher is able, through this study, to have a record of each individual's errors and of his test, which was based on the characteristic errors of his group. From these records the teacher can measure the student's progress.

To the students, this thesis is invaluable for it called to their attention their grammatical weaknesses.



The procedure followed in this thesis should suggest to the students the practical value they would get from conducting an individual study of their own errors.

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